



**Trinity School**

A Church of England  
Academy

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Ms Jo Hawkin  
Headteacher

2 July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Mobile Phones – Change to school policy from September 2021**

Since we returned to school, after two long lockdown periods, we have witnessed the impact that these lockdowns have had on our students. Students have spent a lot of time using technology for learning and social interaction with others. We are increasingly concerned about the lack of social interaction between students face to face. There are times at break and lunchtimes when students sitting next to each other send messages instead of talking!

Studies have been conducted about the academic performance of students in schools where mobiles are not allowed compared to schools where they are permitted. Results showed that test scores of 16 year olds improved by 6.4%, the equivalent of adding five days to the school year according to economists. Both the Secretary of State for Education and the Chief Inspector of Schools have made it clear that their view is that schools should consider banning mobile phones during the day and support schools who choose to do this. It is likely that there may be national changes soon around mobile phone use in schools.

More worrying is the increase in the number of issues due to mobile phone misuse, both in and out of school. Whilst the majority of these incidents occur outside school hours, it is inevitable that students share information in school causing further issues for pastoral staff to deal with that could be left at the school gates.

Some of the things we have seen recently include:

- Inappropriate images being sent between students (sexting)
- Coercive behaviour to force students to send images
- Videoing of arranged fights and sharing this with others
- Online bullying and abuse
- Online racial or homophobic abuse
- Recording of staff and students without consent

Though the number of serious incidents is still low and are dealt with effectively by pastoral teams when we are made aware of incidents, we feel the need to consider what extra steps we must take to keep students safe in school. We have already amended our personal development programme to include extra sessions at short notice involving our external partners.

We have spoken with teaching and pastoral staff and it is clear that mobile phones are also causing disruption during lessons, with students using their phones when they should not and some students refusing to hand over phones when they are instructed to do so. This is leading to lost learning for the majority of students who always do their best in lessons. There are times, too, when parents send messages to their child in lessons and sometimes arrive at school with no appointment due to an inaccurate message sent by their child.



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We have been regularly reminding students of our policy since the start of the year and have encouraged students to comply, however we are now at a point where there is too much time wasted on this issue when pastoral staff could be supporting students' welfare and teaching staff should be teaching. Therefore, **from September mobile phones will not be permitted in school during the school day**. If there is an emergency, school staff will contact you as usual and you can continue to get urgent messages to your child by phoning the school and speaking to reception staff.

We realise that some students need a mobile phone for emergencies on their way to and from school and we are therefore proposing an option for students to hand in phones before they come into school and this will be stored until the end of the day. Our new procedure will operate as follows:

- School advice is that students do not bring mobiles to school.
- This includes smart watches, mp3 players, tablets and headphones
- If parents give permission, students may bring a phone to school and hand it in to staff on the way into the building.
- These phones will be kept in a named wallet and will be locked away during the day.
- School is not responsible for the loss or damage to phones while on the premises.
- If a student is found with a phone, whether switched on or not, the phone will be confiscated.
- Refusal to hand over a phone will lead to an appropriate sanction.
- Parents/carers will be informed and with their agreement the phone will be returned for the journey home the first time. If it happens again, parents/carers must come to school to collect the phone from reception and it may not be possible to return the phone on the day it is confiscated.

For students in the sixth form, they will be allowed to use their phones at break and lunch only, unless part of a learning activity directed by their teacher.

If you wish that your child brings their phone to school to be handed in at the school entrance, please confirm by completing the online permission slip by using the link below. If this is not filled in, we will assume that your child will not bring their phone into school.

[Mobile Phone Consent September 2021](#)

We know that this change of policy will not be welcomed by all parents/carers but we ask for your support. The issues we have witnessed this year require difficult decisions to be made in the interests of student wellbeing, safety and education.

Yours sincerely

Jo Hawkin  
**Headteacher**